

Maurice Hinchey NEWS

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WESTCHESTER MEDICAL AWARDED \$455,303 FOR LINK WITH ELLENVILLE HOSPITAL

WASHINGTON - U.S. Representative Maurice Hinchey (NY-26) today announced that Westchester County Health Care Corporation has been awarded a grant of \$455,303 for the purpose of electronically linking Westchester Medical Center with Ellenville Regional Hospital and the Mid-Hudson Family Practice Center in Ellenville. The grant is awarded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture through the Distance Learning and Telemedicine program.

"This grant is going to give Ellenville Hospital a tremendous resource that will greatly benefit area residents," said Hinchey. "The technology of telemedicine virtually eliminates the geographical distance between the community hospital and its parent hospital in Westchester for some services. It will greatly decrease the need for people in the Ellenville area to travel for diagnostic exams."

The funding announced today will provide telemedicine services to electronically link medical professionals so they can exchange health care information, thereby improving medical services to residents of the Ellenville area. This project, called the Healthy Outlook Network Telemedicine Program, will allow physicians to use state-of-the-art diagnostic services and minimize the need for their patients to be sent to larger medical centers.

The application submitted by Westchester County Health Care was aided by the fact that Ellenville is part of the Sullivan-Wawarsing Rural Economic Area Partnership (REAP) Zone. The REAP Zone was created in January 1999 through an agreement between Hinchey, the Secretary of Agriculture, and local leaders to assist the area in community development. As a REAP Zone-endorsed project, the grant application received discretionary points in the competitive selection process.

The Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant Program was created in 1993 to help rural schools and health care providers invest in telecommunications facilities and equipment to bring educational and medical resources to rural areas.